

Research Article

From Policy Advisors to Transfer Agents: Understanding the Role of Policy Advisors in the Circulation of Good Governance Principles in the Global South

Njanjo Ekoungkang Aimee Laure* 

Department of Political Science, University of Bertoua, Bertoua, Cameroon

Abstract

By the moment policy advisory system (PAS) gains field as a scientific object in public policy; different studies on the subject explore its importance in political systems. They reveal that PAS provides a significant support to public policy decision for central and local governments, thereby highlighting its impact in decision and policy-making process within these systems. While agreeing with this evidence, the present paper focuses on the role of Policy Advice Actors (PAA) in the diffusion and transfer of good governance principles at the international level. The aim of this paper is therefore to contribute to the debate on the multiple facets of policy advisory system in Africa by analyzing the dynamics of policy advisors in policy decision. It eventually tries to link PAS to policy diffusion and highlights how the PAS is being used by these actors to crystallize their knowledge and ideas into different political systems. The present paper is a qualitative analysis based on empirical evidence and the existing literature on the issue in Africa and particularly in Cameroon. Henceforth, it is argued that policy transfer especially diffusion is an important mechanism of PAS in the global south, of course as external policy advice is concerned, international organizations that constitute the main actors of this system are engaged into providing global solution for southern countries rather than policy innovation. Despite this evidence these actors may somehow be confronted to different degrees of complexity into the local context.

Keywords

Policy Advice System, Policy Transfer, Policy Making, Good Governance

1. Introduction

PAS have been considered over years as an alternative model in the understanding of policy making and decision-making; and a support to government officials seeking for solutions to their ever-growing public issues. The abounding literature on the subject have provided a significant and subsequent knowledge and information that contribute to deepen the understanding of this concept especially in public

policy. It is stressed from these various analyses that there are two main streams in PAS studies. The first one is relative to the identification of PAS Actors and the second one concerns the Impact and influence of policy actors on policy and decision-making (in other words the degree of acceptance of the advices by governments). Of course actors taking part to PAS are varied and their roles differ according to political systems

*Corresponding author: nealaure@yahoo.fr (Njanjo Ekoungkang Aimee Laure)

Received: 13 April 2024; **Accepted:** 5 June 2024; **Published:** 20 September 2024



Copyright: © The Author(s), 2024. Published by Science Publishing Group. This is an **Open Access** article, distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

[1, 2], they are categorized under internal or external of policy advice. As externalization of PAS is concerned: individuals, experts, academicians, IOs, NGOs, think tanks, Cabinets, are considered as the main actors. While actors that are considered as insight advisors are composed of ministries, consultative commissions, ad hoc committees, etc [1]. The identification of the different actors highlights the legitimization of policy advisors within the political apparatus who can provide formal or informal advice. The second stream concerning PAS studies is the impact and influence policy advisors on design and decision-making. Of course many authors have focused their analysis on the degree of acceptance of these advices by governments. According to J. Craft and Halligan [3] there are two aspects of this influence that need to be considered: the impact on policy design and decision-making; the second one is the impact on implementation. As the author stands that not all policy advisors take part to the implementation process. Of course depending on their influence and legitimization, some advisors are present in both processes while others influence is limited to policy formulation.

Besides these two main streams, other axes are equally studied by academicians; it concerns the processes of policy advice as well as the why and when these advices are needed by governments. As it is the case for the two previous axes, reasons are numerous thereby enriching the knowledge relative to this concept. The diversity of approaches on the study object reveals its multidimensionality as well as its importance in the analysis of policy making. The present paper therefore intends to analyze one of the multiple aspects of PAS, and deepens the understanding of policy making in public policy and decision-making, by answering the question how do policy advisors use PAS to circulate good governance principles and norms in most LDCs in Africa?

What is learned in a general view in PAS analysis is that governments seek for better ideas that can reinforce good governance; which is the main purpose of policy advice. This is particularly the case in LDCs of sub-Saharan Africa where good governance is a keen issue in international development [4]; and it implies almost all the sectors: education; health, public service and administration; agriculture, etc. In the quest for good governance, governments may look for advice inside or outside the traditional advisory system for different reasons. In the case of LDCs, governments get advices from various sources especially from international donors and partners on which they depend for different resources (financial and technical, as well as human and technological). Advices provided by these advisors can be opinions, ideas, knowledge and information, etc [5]. They can be a source of policy innovation or transferred policy advice (programs, institutions, etc.). [6]. This second aspect is, of course, the main interest in this study; while analyzing the role of policy advisors in the diffusion of good governance at the international level. Indeed it is argued in this study that PAS is a source of policy transfer and that advices provided by external advisors in LDC are mainly concerned by the adaptation and translation of pro-

grams, ideas and knowledge diffused in the international system and that is considered as good practices in governance; rather than policy innovation. Meaning that in most cases these advices are not tailored or authentic policy decisions but emanate from a policy designed elsewhere [7]. Information and knowledge provided to governments are not only sources of policy innovation and authentic policy making but equally constitute a road for international policy transfer that includes knowledge and policies developed in other areas.

The present argument is at the corner stone of the various studies on PAS that identify international organizations as policy advisors [8]. It explores another facet of policy advice that questions the role of actors in internationalization of good governance practices using PAS as circulatory places for the diffusion and policy transfer. It claims that advice is not only at the benefit of governments, policy advisors equally try to maximize their influence on the system through the introduction of their ideas and norms (I); and policy advice is a complex environment within which these actors try to legitimize their actions and strengthen their position into the policy advise systems of governments and administrations as it is the case in the global south (II). Policy diffusion and transfer compose one of the main features of policy advice; it answers to the questions who, why, how and when governments request for advice outside the traditional advisory system. It eventually emphasizes on the nature and form of advice that seeks uniformity or standardization of policy output, etc. the present analysis suggests that policy advisory system in global south countries is a source of policy transfer; most advisors use this channel to promote their visions, ideas, policies and other forms of knowledge from one system to another. This is the case of external advisors such as think tanks, cabinets, NGOs and IOs, etc. that utilize PAS to increase their impact by diffusing norms and standards they promote at the international level thereby legitimizing their positions as leaders in various domains within which their advices are needed.

For the purpose of this study, IOs constitutes the main object which is analyzed. Due to their importance within PAS in LDCs, it is always interesting to analyze transformations their role in policy making in these countries. For instance, rational choice institutionalism and policy transfer compose the theoretical framework of this study, they are used to analyze and explain the game of actors in the course of policy advice that favor policy transfer. This theoretical framework is useful to explain the process through which actors in the PAS, internationalized their norms and principles relative to good governance and challenges they are facing in this context.

2. Internationalization of Good Governance in Africa: The Role of Policy Advisors

The various crises faced by a number of African countries in the 1990s have shown the limits of these governments in

addressing problems arising in their respective national systems. Moreover, the incoming of new form of governance under the banner of democracy and followed by New Public Management have requested the assistance of actors outside the system who have shown different capacities and resources in policy formulation as well as public management. The introduction of new actors in public decision-making; among other measures, have been the result of international organizations and donors conditionality to financial and technical assistance of African countries. It is argued that programs and policies put in place by International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB) (i.e. Structural Adjustment Program) in the scope of economic development of these countries have been the premise external policy advice in African Countries [9]. Of course the democratization of public action has open up policy processes in the public sector and enables actors outside the system to position themselves as key partners in policy making, decision taking and implementation of public policies.

It is nevertheless important to outline that most African countries have a long tradition of PAS in their process of policy making; this is a legacy from colonization that crystallized in African policy process the dependence on external advice with the influence of westernization of state construction after independence [10]. Policy transfer is not only cognitive, based on ideas, knowledge that can constitute original policies at the local level, but equally stands on normative transfer that lies on preconceived programs which are adapted to national systems that voluntary or involuntary seeks for efficient and effective solutions into the international system. In this perspective, most IOs (and some NGOs) are considered as norm entrepreneurs who do undertake both normative and cognitive transfer through PAS in African countries; while together with other up-listed actors equally play the role of transfer agents. They do not only edict international norms and standards but equally ensure they are adopted by different countries especially by LDCs.

2.1. Policy Advisors as Norm Entrepreneurs: What Is Transferred in Policy Advice System

This section treats of the content of policy transfer; it stands that the nature of advice provided by external policy advisors reflects their fundamental ideas of good governance designed by IOs and International Donors in Africa. This is done by providing informal and formal information to governments [8]. From the stance of various authors, state building in Africa has favored and facilitated the transfer of international ideas such as good governance developed by actors of international financial systems like WB and IMF) [11]. It eventually stuck on the importance of idea in policy diffusion, transfer and particularly in policy making. Ideation has become a main topic in public policy in recent years, according to Swinkels [12] it is essential while explaining policy change

and decision-making processes. Ideation is considered as a source to all human action [13] as it is the case in public action. Following the perception of D. Graham and T. Bachman [13] each action is underpinned by an idea, this idea characterizes every human being, company, or institution as well. Ideas can be considered as beliefs held by individuals or adopted by an institution to influence their actions and attitudes [14]. It is argued that each policy advisor is, first of all, motivated by the diffusion and circulation of its fundamental ideas within domains he operates. Hence ideas are not only important for government in shaping public policies, they are also useful to external policy advisors to shape their beliefs relative to what is good or bad concerning governance of public affairs.

Henceforth the process of advice in state building from international and external actors since the early construction of state in African countries until now is based on the uniformity or standardization of national systems based on the adoption of neoliberal ideas such democracy. In this scope; external advisors such as IOs and international donors; in their assistance to LDCs influence adoption of ideas and norms that promote human rights, freedom of speech, market liberalism; etc. as well as social accountability into national systems; of a post bipolar era. Hence advices provided by international partners of African countries in the sub-Sahara region range from original ideas on development to pre-designed programs and policies that are considered as the one best way in policy design and good governance as well. As original ideas are concerned; it is argued that globalization in the last decades have raised issues that international and national systems and which solutions are designed at the global level by actors having the capacity and resources to initiate global actions such UNO; Bretton Woods Institutions or international Donors. These actors are considered as rational agents capable of providing effective and efficient advice to governments to reach a considerable level of economic growth and development. Among the various ideas and knowledge diffuse at the international system by norm entrepreneur is the ICT as a good governance tool. This idea has been developed by WB, IMF and United Nations (UN) agencies such as UNESCO, International Telecommunication Agency (ITA) etc. behind this idea, the belief that ICT can engender significant changes in public management and governance in general. These beliefs and ideas are gathered and organized into norms and standards or programs by norm entrepreneurs; and diffused into the international system. Policy advisors attempt to rationalize and objectify these actions by influencing the adoption of such ideas and norms by various governments.

What is known today as E-governance, which is the use of ICT in G2G communication, G2C communication, G2B communication have been advertised by IOs in the process of democratization of African countries [15]. International partners and donors in LDCs have presented ICT as a new tool in development, capable to help these countries to meet their various goals and improve upon governance. Of course this belief has been internationalized by IOs such as WB, UN

agencies that have contributed to the development and expansion of key concepts that are diffused into the national system and which have significantly influence policy making and decision taking in the Global South (coercively or voluntarily). This is the case of concepts such as Information and Communication Technology for Development (ICTD); Communication for Development (C4D). According to these organizations, ICT are not only important in economic growth and development but rather significantly impact social, cultural and political development in LDCs. The diffusion of these ideas and beliefs into national systems have eventually influenced policy making in sectors such as telecommunication, education, agriculture; security, etc. In Cameroon for instance; the international development of ICT has led to the design of related policies (national Digital Policy) and led to the reform of various sectors such as education (introduction of ICT in Nursery, Primary, secondary and Tertiary education sector), telecommunication (policy relative to the National Information and Technology Infrastructure Plan; 2007) and public service (SIGIPES, E-custom; e-passport; E-identification, digitalization of birth registration, etc.). This example is equally observed in other countries in Africa such as Ivory Coast and Senegal that are equally engaged into a huge technological transformation. These various policies have been recommended by IOs and international donors who do consider that ICT and development are closely related concepts that can inversely improve each other (World Summit on Information Society; Geneva 2003). Hence the main belief behind the idea of using ICT at different levels of governance has been the capacity of these technologies to achieve effective public actions.

The capacity of IOs and international partners to turn into norm entrepreneurs have also been seen in 2020 in the early stage of Covid-19 crisis; when out a vast policy bricolage, they were able to settle sanitary norms adopted by most countries especially in Africa. The various measures that were adopted by the WHO to prevent Corona virus transmission has been recommended as the best way to prevent and fight against the pandemic (wearing a mask; social distancing; hand washing and cleaning; etc.); based on the idea that a common approach to problem solving was a better solution to it (while local measures to fight against the pandemic have been minimized e.g. Madagascar). Henceforth in the fight against the Corona Virus; most African countries relied on external advice to fight against Covid-19 even though they have not been the most affected by the crisis; it eventually raises the question on when do governments need advice from outside the traditional advisory system.

Additionally to cognitive transfer, norm entrepreneur equally operates normative transfer in the course of advising governments. These are mostly based on the ideas that they develop, they are more rigid codes of conducts defined under norms, programs and well-scheduled policies which adoptions are compulsory or not. This is the case of various agendas for the promotion of ICT (directly or indirectly) put

in place by the UN agencies, WB that promoted and transfer them within national systems e.g. MDGs SDGs, Information Society agenda, that promote the idea of e-governance just to mention these few examples. As Covid-19 is concerned, the WHO and WB have put in place policies and programs that were diffused into the international system and adopted by a number of African countries as a good governance practices in the fight against the crisis. It is argued that external advice system especially in LDCs is dominated by IOs whose priority in PAS is the transfer ideas inherent to them and the harmonization of good governance practice at the global level and this gives rise to well defines programs, policies, etc. that they try to adapt at the local level. While considering this fact; it is equally argued that external advisers are not just norm entrepreneurs, they can equally play the role of transfer agents thereby linking the national to the international by diffusing norms and standards developed in other places. This is often true of some IOs; NGOs; experts, etc.

2.2. Policy Advisors as Transfer Agents in the Policy Advisory Process

According to Diane Stone and al [16], among the main actions carried out by IOs is policy advice to governments, they consider policy advice a specific and distinct action, different from their transfer activities. Authors identify various means of transfer IOs operate: technical assistance, knowledge production, promotion of meetings among political authorities, bureaucracies, organizing workshops, policy labs and field trip visits, capacity building benchmarking, advocacy of specific tools, models, best practices, sharing of persuasive strategies, promotion of broad agendas, etc. while agreeing with this fact, it is argued that in the case of LDCs the role of IOs between policy advisors and transfer agents intertwined. The long tradition of externalization of policy advice of certain countries in Africa have favored the implementation of IOs as main actors within their policy-making process, which in turn have largely opened the way to a policy transfer system within the existing PAS. As up mentioned, what is transferred is very important, by presenting IOs as norm entrepreneurs it was argued that in the process of advice and recommendations to governments in the global south provided by IOs (such as WB, IMF and different UN agencies) prioritize the transfer of norms, standards, agendas, policies, knowledge, ideas that they diffuse into the international system.

The present section tries to analyze the processes of transfer. It eventually answers the question how policy advisors do transfer their norms and principles into the PAS. The role of policy advisors in this section is not less complex to identify and the multiplicity of actors intervening in the transfer process foster this complexity. Of course policy advisors use different mechanisms to transfer norms and standards into various governance levels from the international to the national. As argued by various authors such as J. Kulhman [17] there are four main mechanisms through which transfer op-

erates: coercion, competition, emulation and learning that is categorized here as voluntary and non-voluntary transfer (coercive). Some policy advisors use these various mechanisms to transfer good governance principles at national and local levels; as good governance and development is concerned, policy advisors engaged into policy transfer in the global south and particularly as it is the case in sub-Saharan African region use both voluntary (learning) and non-voluntary mechanisms (coercion).

In the process of coercive transfer, IOs are identified as the main actors that can influence and to an extent compel governments to adopt recommendations and advices relative to good governance [18]. These actors as up mentioned are both norm entrepreneurs and transfer agents, they play the role of coercive transfer agents and voluntary transfer agents. International treaties, conventions, agreements, etc. signed between LDCs and IOs as well as international partners constitute the main channels through which policy advice operates between these various actors. Bidding from financial partners, especially in a long-term loan is the opportunity for IOs such as WB and IMF to continuously and endlessly diffuse and transfer new ideas, information, knowledge and norms as well as advice towards LDCs who are compelled to their adoption through various means such as legal means, economic sanctions and to and extend military interventions. UNESCO for instance keep on providing policy advice to countries (that have signed the convention) in the development of effective legislation and policies for safeguard and of intangible cultural heritage through this system the organization ensures the continuous transfer global idea and knowledge and programs to member state that can influence their policies and legislation on the up-mentioned object. The adoption of ICT in the public sector for effective G2G, G2C G2B communication and so on in LDCs have required these ones to adopt international regulations on telecommunication and other advices for the global promotion of internet, telecommunication infrastructure and fight against cyber-crimes as advised by ITO (National information and communication infrastructure of Cameroon, National information and communication infrastructure Ivory Coast).

In the process of voluntary transfer, even if the global approach is observed, it constitutes a more individual approach in policy transfer. According to Dolowitz and Marsh's model, the policy continuum explains the transition of a policy transfer from voluntary to coercive and vice versa; it is used in this case to explain the role of IOs as agents of non-coercive transfer agents. Indeed IOs are made up of governments that usually joint the organization voluntarily and are later on bind by the respect of the various obligations that are related to their membership (as it is the case of UNO and UN charter). Governments joint these organizations for various reasons as up listed and among voluntary reasons or mechanisms are learning and emulation. IOs often undertake learning operation in LDCs in the Sub-Saharan countries through which they diffuse and transfer ideas and knowledge as well as recent

data on pinning issues through capacity building to civil servants and construction of circulatory places such as conferences, workshops, etc. were IOs present and advocate for new approaches in governance in different sectoral environments. The organization of international conferences such as the different COOPs, World Summits of Information Society (2003, 2005), SDGs conferences, etc. are considered as circulatory places where IOs convey governments to learn about policies and programs as well as ideas, knowledge and updates on various issues. There are equally national and local events that are organized by these organizations to transfer different instruments to other actors capable of playing a role in policy advice in local context such as think tanks, experts, associations and NGOs mostly of national basement. This evidence highlights the importance of IOs in policy advice especially in Sub-Saharan African countries where resources (mostly financial and technical) they allocate in the development of national NGO, associations think tanks, cabinets greatly influence actions and advice these ones provide to their respective governments. IOs equally use learning to transfer ideas, information and knowledge not only to governments, but equally to these actors that can influence policy making and eventually undertake public actions. In 2021 UNWomen have organized in Cameroon a forum on inclusion/leadership and participation of women and girls in lac Chad Basin. This forum that gathered various NGOs from West and Central Africa was the occasion for the agency to acknowledge the audience on the UN compact and the Nexus Peace-Humanitarian-Development, the Regional representative Marie Josée Kandanga have recommended that NGOs and associations present during the forum advice their respective governments to adopt the UN compact, while Jahal B Rabesahala de Meritens, UN resident coordinator, advocates for the adoption of Nexus by governments and equally encouraged these actors to influence their respective governments in the adoption of this new idea developed by UN agencies. On the other hand, the final aim of this forum was the presentation of outputs to the meeting of governors of the lake Chad Basin in October of the same year in order to present the various recommendations adopted during the forum. For instance, transfer in policy advice can equally be drawn by government officials that voluntarily request the advice of IOs, for instance in 2021, the network of Cameroon women parliamentarians have requested from UN Women and UN Human Right (Cameroon) a workshop for capacity building of its members in the Congress Palace of Yaoundé. During this work shop, the various representatives of UN agencies have vehicle norms and standards of the organization and respective agencies relative to gender inclusion in politics and good practices and experiences in the management of COVID-19. In this line they have advice parliamentarians to adopt and take into consideration UN programs and regulations in the promotion of women in politics and protection of minorities against risks and catastrophes.

Additionally to the up mentioned voluntary transfer exam-

ples, IOs equally provide knowledge and statistical information on the development and evolution of the norms through country reports, journals, books, etc., these documents are a condensation of successes and failures as well as advices and future directions that can be learned by countries and direct their national ICT policies. Certain organizations such as IMF, WBG, UNESCO have gained scientific legitimacy by providing scientific knowledge available to the general public that can be used by policy advisors the internal or external systems. IOs are mentioned in this work as important actors that can influence policy advice systems of governments by transferring international norms and standards relative to good governance practices, rather than providing innovative and specific advice to countries in the sub-Saharan region. It should nevertheless be highlighted that their role is challenged by a crisis of legitimacy and translation of their various norms and standards to the local context.

3. PAS and Complexity of Policy Transfer in the Global South

There exist a complexity in the process of policy transfer within PAS. The complexity lies on the capacity of policy advisors to effectively undertake transfer of their norms through the advice that they provide to governments. Despite the fact that some of these actors have influence on policy-making processes as it is the case of some international donors in the global south, they nevertheless face complexity in translation of their various norms and standards at the local level.

3.1. Policy Advisors and Legitimation Crisis Within a Transfer System

The link between legitimation and policy transfer in the process of PAS is compliance. J. Tallberg refers to legitimation as a game of actors seeking to make political institutions more legitimate by boosting believes that its rule is exercised proportionally [19]. With lost in monopoly of some African states and governments in decision-making and policy making since the late 1980s, along with the consequences of democratization of PAS; the various actors operating within this system try to maximize their influence and increase their importance. PAS is an unpredictable environment; there is a constant renewal of actors according to the objectives of governments and it is in this view that they compete between each other to legitimate their respective positions. PAS is therefore a competitive system within which external actors are continuously seeking for legitimacy. As explained by Jonas Talberg and Michael Zurn [19] the legitimacy of IOs is settled in their ability to secure compliance with international rules and norms hence, a high degree of legitimacy induces high compliance or convergence while a low degree of legitimacy will produce the reverse action. This is measured by

the gap between formulation and adoption.

In the most recent years, it has been observed a legitimacy crisis of IOs as well as international partners in PAS of some countries of in the Sub-Saharan region. From the stance of Thomas Sommerer and Al [20] (2022) there exist 5 main conceptions of legitimacy crisis: social perception, perception of rule without right, perception by a relevant group of people, a perception of unusual intensity that involves a critical reaction to status quo, and the last one the perception limited to a particular frame of time. These various descriptions, of course, clearly explains the legitimation crisis faced by some IOs such UN, etc. in advising countries within the region, this is the case of contestation against UN in Gomo, DRC and Mali; against military operations of MINUSCO and MINUSMA in these respective countries (perception of unusual intensity that involves a critical reaction to status quo). More recently, it is South Soudan that has accused the UN representative to be at the origin of the crisis with North Soudan and requested his departure. During the Covid-19 crisis 2020-2021 different governments have stood against the various recommendations of WHO especially concerning vaccines that have been presented as the most effective actions against this pandemic (USA with the various declarations of President Trumps especially on the contributions of the country to this agency; Madagascar with the declarations of her president Andry Rajoelina who has stood against Vaccination). Such examples become numerous within the continent, the capacity of UN and some of its agencies to effectively contribute to policy in some African countries is doubted by their governments and population thereby leading to a legitimacy crisis. These IOs see their legitimation put into question even though they have been over decades the main ODA of these countries, the main consequence of such crisis is the drop of IOs influence in PAS of such countries especially as policy transfer is concerned.

Moreover, the legitimacy crisis of IOs does not only affect these organizations but equally their various networks and partners which may be engaged into a transfer process of their norms and standards and this for various reasons.

Unlike IOs and despite their growing number over the continent, think tanks in Africa and particularly in Cameroon do not have the same influence and legitimacy. Nevertheless they compete at the national level by providing reports, capacity building for public administrators, etc. they try to position themselves as legitimate actors that can provide better information and knowledge to governments due to their proximity with the local. They invest the public place by providing reports on public issues and bargain to participate to policy-making processes. The various think tanks have a national basement and rarely go international. International think tanks, on the other hand, have gained legitimacy through to the nature of their competencies; they are usually requested by government themselves or by international donors thereby fostering their position in the PAS. Most often these international think tanks are equally present in the implementation process where they ensure that their idea is transmitted through this process.

As NGOs are concerned; they try to legitimate their position into PAS as transfer agents through different means. If some NGOs have already gained legitimacy through their actions over times; not all NGOs can pretend to influence policy making and decision taking. This is the case mostly of international NGOs such as Red Cross; Transparency International; Médecins sans Frontiers; Reporters sans Frontiers, while those seeking legitimacy may use coalition framework with local and national association to influence PAS within a given political system. It should nevertheless be mentioned that all these actors together with IOs usually form networks at the international level. This network is often used to legitimize the position and amplify the influence of each actor involved. According to D. Stone; international policy networks are made of multiple actors entities that oscillate a common or shared policy problem [21] and if the author does not specifically make mention of NGO; it is argued that these various entities operate into networks in Sub-Saharan countries such as Cameroon. It is the collaboration with various IOs and multilateral organizations that give to most NGOs the legitimacy to influence PAS. Moreover other actors stand that the legitimacy of actors such as NGO is gained from the population according to the interest that they defend [22] and in return these organizations have an influence on considerations governments have to their advice and opinions.

The last but not the least is the legitimization of experts in policy transfer within PAS. As stances by various actors [23, 18] the role of experts is not simple to understand. Of course as argued in the previous lines; experts or individuals are agents of both voluntary and coercive transfer; in the process of policy advice their legitimization is often questioned. It is argued that the legitimacy of experts in PAS depends on the government or international donors. Authors Dolowitz and Marsh argue that these advises or actions are conditioned by people that needs their expertise; for instance, if the government chooses a cabinet this one may act in favor of the government and if this one is requested by an international donor he will act accordingly. The reason being that the cabinet will try to maximize its action; so that it should be associate the next time to policy making and decision-making and later on use this legitimacy to seek for other positions at the international level or in another public administration within the same country.

3.2. Complexity of Translation and Adaptation to the Local Context

The very focus of PAS studies have been the capacity of actors to participate to the policy-making process; while the impact and influence literature are beginning to expand. Of course talking about policy transfer in policy making is not only considering the role of actors but equally questioning the process of implementation and if external PAS worth it. In front of the difficulties of some governments to efficiently address issues from inside; external advisors or Policy Advice System have been portrayed as a solution to affective and efficient

public and global governance. D. Stone who have worked on this issue stance that international actors in PAS act for the convergence of identical policy systems as it is the case of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Of course this evidence is also through when it comes PAS in Africa especially as externalization is concerned. For instance, the ideas; norms or standards developed by IOs and international partners are diffused through a set of programs categorize according to similarities and convergence of different political systems. Hence these actors develop regional policies that are transferred among countries facing the same issues within the same region or subregion even though it address a more general issue at the global level. This is the case of SAP policies; SDGs, MDGs etc. as Africa is concerned literature has always examine the impact of international policies on local development that they consider; as being inadequate to the local context. According to Hassenteufel and Zeigermann, [24] translation is complementary to policy transfer because it focuses on the role of specific actors in the various steps of policy transfer and particularly implementation. Hence the role played by these advisors is complex, it implies they influence all the decision-making process and in the case of a policy transfer they advise on solution to take, as well as the implementation strategies; and in a not shell, monitoring and evaluation. It is a continuous process of actors interactions composed of various dimensions- reformulation-negotiation between actors involved in reformulation - the assignment of different roles of actors during this process – mobilization of actors in this process that allows the achievement of the action (p. 60). From this stance; it is argued that the role of policy advisors in the course of internationalization of ideas and knowledge is not only limited to the influence of policy making process, it is extended to the various processes of public policy as considered within the stages approach (from formulation to implementation, passing through monitoring). Therefore policy advisors in their role of transfer agents ensure that their norms and standards that are diffused through the PAS are translated efficiently into the local context to ensure the success of targeted objectives.

Moreover it is not just the main ideas and knowledge that are transferred through PAS to governments (macro policy transfer); equally micro transfer takes place and actors of the international system use their influence to transfer good practices at the bureaucratic level or administrative level. Agencification is in some cases used to ensure (coercively or voluntarily) that the various steps and or rather the “how to do it” is respected by government officials. In a general way, IOs in policy transfer are not present at all stages of policy making as up mentioned and as it has been highlighted that, they may equally bargain to be part of implementation process to control the gap between the input and the output into the system and eventually take advantage of feedback to continuously influence government officials. The success of translation and adaptation to the local context for instance foster the role of external policy advisors as transfer agents while its failure will lead government officials

to undermine these actors' advises. According to J. Tallberg [21], the failure of legitimacy of IOs contributes to democracy deficit in global governance; an example is the difficulty of WHO to maintain its legitimacy throughout the Covid-19 crisis period worldwide. For this reason IOs as well as all actors of the external PAS try to expand their influence beyond to policy formulation and impact policy output.

4. Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to understand the role played by policy advisors in the internationalization of good governance principles and it eventually focused on the role of external advisors taking as case study IOs. It has been demonstrated that IO eventually play a role of transfer agents in policy advice systems in Africa. They use the system of advice to diffuse their beliefs, ideas and norms in relation to good governance practices; in the global south. It is therefore argued here that policy advisors (IOs) in the international system are norms entrepreneurs, they set up norms and standards on the basis of their ideas to define what is good or not in public management and diffuse them through various mechanisms such as policy advice. They are therefore considered as agents of transfer or agents of convergence that harmonize practices at the global level to influence social perceptions. Most often, these advices are not tailored or authentic solutions but rather 'fit in' solutions to governance crisis in most African countries.

This role is complicated by two main factors that need to be taken into consideration: the legitimation of actors and the translation of transferred norms and standards to the local context. Of course not all actors have legitimacy in the transfer of a policy through PAS, it raises the issue of influence of actors into policy-making process. More over the role of policy advisors in a transfer process is not limited to policy formulation, some of these actors take part to public action and implementation in order to control policy output and maintain their legitimacy within political systems. Analysis of policy transfer in the process of policy advice brings in another perspective in PAS; it shows the multidimensional aspect of this system. This can be useful in understanding the actions and interactions of actors as well as their interest within this one, as well as the process of policy transfer within PAS. Of course the present study needs to be clarified and improved in order to link theoretically PAS to Policy transfer system. Nevertheless taking into consideration the relation that exists between IOs and policy making in Sub-Saharan Africa, it is not obvious, not to analyze PAS (external) as a system of policy transfer that IOs use to continuously diffuse new norms, standards and in a more general manner their vision of the good governance.

Abbreviations

PAS Policy Advice System

IOs	International Organizations
IMF	International Monetary Fund
WB	World Bank
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
WHO	World Health Organization
UNESCO	United Nations for Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
LDCs	Less Developed Countries

Author Contributions

Njanjo Ekoungkang Aimee Laure is the sole author. The author read and approved the final manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

References

- [1] Howlett, M. and Migone, A. (2013). Policy Advice through the Market: The Role of External Consultants in Contemporary Policy Advisory Systems. *Policy and Society*, 32, 241-254. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polsoc.2013.07.005>
- [2] Pierre Squevin et David Aubin (2023). L'utilisation des conseils politiques dans les cabinets ministériels belges: l'importance des sources internes et externes de conseil; dans la Revue Internationales des Sciences Administratives, vol 89, PAGES 511-529. <https://doi.org/10.3917/risa.894.051>
- [3] Jonathan Craft and John Halligan (2020), Advising Governments in the Westminster Tradition: Policy Advisory Systems in Australia, Britain, Canada, and New Zealand. *Public Administration Review* Volume 82, Issue 4 p. 778-780. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108377133>
- [4] Rachel M. Gisselquist (2012) Good Governance as a Concept, and Why This Matters for Development Policy, working paper No 2021/30, UNU World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER) Katajanokanlaituri 6 B, 00160 Helsinki, Finland.
- [5] Maaraja Rautalin; Jukka Syvatera and Eetu Vento (2023): packaging OECD policy advice: universal policy model and domestication of recommendations; contemporary politics; <https://doi.org/10.1080/13569775.2022.2163547>
- [6] Diane Stone (2003) "Transnational Transfer Agents and Global Networks in the 'Internationalisation' of Policy", *Leverhulme Centre for Research on Globalization and Economic Policy School of Economics* University Park Nottingham NG7 2RD.
- [7] Magdelína Hadjiisky (2021), 'international organizations as complex agents in policy transfer processes' in *Handbook of policy transfer, diffusion and circulation*, edited by Osmany Porto Olievera, Edward Edgar Publishing Limited; Cheltenham, UK. Northampton, MA, USA. 299, page 121-154. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781789905601.00015>

- [8] Fang, Songying & Stone, Randall. (2012). International Organizations as Policy Advisors. *International Organization*. 66. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818312000276>
- [9] Monique Newaik, Alex Segura-Ubiergo and Abdoul A Wane (2022), Good Governance in Sub-Saharan Africa: opportunities and lessons. *International Monetary Fund*, pages 347 <https://doi.org/10.5089/9781513584058.071>
- [10] Jong-Dae Park (2019). Review of conventional explanations in Reinventing Africa's Development. *Palmgrave Macmillan*. Pp 63-109. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-03946-2_3
- [11] Joseph Keutcheu (2021). L'ingérence démocratique en Afrique comme institution, dispositif et scène. *Etudes Internationales* Volume 45, issue 3, page 425-451. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1027554arCopiedAn>
- [12] Marij Swinkels (2020). How ideas matter in public policy: a review of concepts, mechanisms and methods. *International review of public policy*. Volume 2, pages 281-316 <https://doi.org/10.4000/irpp.1343>
- [13] Douglas Graham & Thomas T. Bacham (2004); *Ideation: The Birth and Death of Ideas*. John Wiley & Sons; Inc. pages. New Jersey. ISBN 10: 0471479446 / ISBN 13: 9780471479444.
- [14] Bédard Daniel and Robert Henry Cox (2010). *Ideas and politics in Social Science research*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199736430.001.0001>
- [15] Shirin Madon (2017), *E-governance for Development: a Focus in Rural India*. Palmgrave Macmillan, London. Pages 178. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230250499>
- [16] Diana Stone (2019) in Osmany Porto Oliveira (Ed) (2021) *Handbook of Policy Transfer; Diffusion and circulation*, Edward Elgar Publishing Limited; ISBN 978 1 78990 560.
- [17] J. Kuhlmann (2021). Mechanisms of Policy Transfer and Policy Diffusion. in *Handbook of policy transfer, diffusion and circulation*, edited by Osmany Porto Oliveira, Edward Elgar Publishing Limited; Cheltenham, UK. Northampton, MA, USA. 299, page 43-57. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781789905601.00010>
- [18] Magdalena Bexell (2014), "Global Governance, legitimacy and (De)legitimation"; in *Globalizations*, Volume 11, issue 3, Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, pages 289-299. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2014.919744>
- [19] Jonas Tallberg and Michael Zürn (2019) "The legitimacy and legitimation of international organizations: introduction and framework" *Rev Int Organ* 14, 581-606 (2019) <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11558-018-9330-79>
- [20] Thomas Sommerer, Hans Agn  Fariborz Zelli and Bart Bess (2022); *Global Legitimacy crises; Decline and revival in multiple governance*, Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780192856326.001.0001>
- [21] UN (2023), Mali: 'MINUSMA is leaving, but the UN is staying', Mission chief says. *Africa Renewal by UN News*. <https://www.un.org/>
- [22] Diane Stone, Osmany Porto de Oliveira & Leslie A. Pal (2020) *Transnational policy transfer: the circulation of ideas, power and development models*, *Policy and Society*, 39: 1, 1-18, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14494035.2019.1619325>
- [23] David Dolowitz and David Marsh (1996). Who Learns What from Whom: a Review of the Policy Transfer. *Literature Political Studies* (1996), XLIV, 343-351. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9248.1996.tb00334.x>
- [24] Hassenteufel, Patrick and U Zeigermann. 2021 'Translation and translators in policy transfer processes'. In O Porto de Oliveira (ed). *Handbook of Policy Transfer, Diffusion and Circulation*, 58-79. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781789905601.00011>